B.C. CORRECTIONS BRANCH

# Beliefs, Goals, and Strategies

**Province of British Columbia**
Ministry of Attorney General

REVISED MAY 1986

86-06192/

# Beliefs, Goals, and Strategies

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## BELIEFS, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

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The Corrections Branch is an integral component of British Columbia's comprehensive justice system. The mission of the branch is to provide the various levels of intervention, security, control, and/or supervision required by that system.

The specific mandate of the branch is to provide courts and other authorities with current, relevant, and accurate justice-related information, supervise probation orders and related court-ordered conditions, operate youth containment centres, and operate adult correctional centres for remanded prisoners and those sentenced by the courts to serve terms less than two years.

The branch recognizes that certain objectives are inherent in the discharge of its mandate; namely:

- protection of the community;
- assurance that court-imposed penalties are carried out in a manner consistent with their intent;
- provision of avenues for offenders to make restitution and reparation for damages to victims and communities;
- provision of positive and constructive activities for offenders in custody or on probation supervision; and
- assistance to sentenced offenders to re-establish themselves in the community following release from custody.

The branch also offers mediation and conciliation services to persons considering court intervention in resolving their family/marital disputes. The branch provides information to the courts to assist in the resolution of those disputes, particularly in matters involving family maintenance and child custody and access.

The branch works with other justice system personnel to advise, assist, and encourage community groups in the development of programs and services for offenders and victims and to promote community crime-prevention initiatives.

In carrying out its program and activities, the branch is also guided by the principle that the community must be satisfied that justice has been done within the framework of societal norms and expectations, judicial requirements, and federal and provincial legislation.
The branch seeks to recruit and maintain trained, competent professionals to ensure that its mission is fulfilled in as effective and efficient manner as possible.

# Part 1

## A. OVERVIEW

Society has many avenues for resolving social conflict. Families, churches, schools, government-operated/-funded social programs, and many privately-operated agencies all attempt to deal with social conflict in various ways.

Generally, the justice system deals with the more serious forms of social conflict, particularly those that violate people's rights. The state assists private parties by providing means for resolving their disputes. In disputes where society's interests are at issue, the state itself takes on the obligation to resolve them.

The justice system attempts to mediate, resolve, and otherwise respond to those forms of social conflict that have been defined by legislative process as requiring some degree of formalized state intervention.

The justice system in Canada exists to protect social institutions and individuals in society, including offenders themselves, by reducing the negative effects of crime and by fairly and humanely dealing with social conflicts that come within the context of law.

## B. THE PURPOSE OF CORRECTIONS

The purpose of the Corrections Branch is to support the justice system by providing services directed towards:

- supporting the development of community resources that prevent social conflict;
- using and improving methods of resolving conflicts informally;
- providing courts, parole boards, and Corrections Branch managers with information they need to make decisions; and
- providing the various levels of intervention, supervision, control, and security required by the dispositions of the court.

## C. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CORRECTIONS

The services offered by the Corrections Branch, which are governed by federal and provincial legislation, are aimed at:

### C 1. SUPPORTING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The branch supports the development of institutions and services that strengthen the community's ability to prevent and resolve social conflict. It is only appropriate for the justice system to intervene when other community systems cannot resolve the issues.

The branch provides conciliation services in family and youth matters to resolve conflicts informally. When conflicts cannot be resolved through these means, the branch will support the parties in their use of the formal justice system.

### C 2. PROVIDING INFORMATION

The branch conducts investigations and provides information to Crown counsel, courts, Corrections Branch managers, and parole boards to help them determine appropriate courses of action.

Information provided to Crown counsel helps them determine whether informal diversion or formal court action should be pursued. The branch may recommend which it considers most appropriate based on whether matters can best be handled and the ends of justice met most appropriately through formal or informal procedures.

Information is provided to the courts on matters concerning family maintenance during separation and custody and guardianship of and access to children by non-custodial parents. Reports, prepared at the request of the court, offer full and careful exploration of the proposed alternative environments in custody and access issues. Emphasis is placed on children's emotional, psychological, and physical needs, as well as attachments, parental roles, and capabilities in the alternative family systems.

Information is also provided to the courts to help determine whether an accused can remain in the community while awaiting trial and the conditions under which such a determination may be made. Information and recommendations are provided to the court on the circumstances of both the offender and the offence to assist the court in determining sentence.

Information provided to parole boards and Corrections Branch managers helps them determine appropriate placement of offenders within the range of custodial programs or in the community under temporary absence or parole supervision. In determining placement, emphasis is given to the purpose of sentence and adequate protection of the community.

## C 3. CARRYING OUT COURT ORDERS

In youth and adult criminal matters, the branch carries out orders of the court by supervising accused persons awaiting trial and administering sentences imposed. (Adults sentenced to terms of imprisonment of two years and over come within the jurisdiction of the federal justice system.)

Persons awaiting trial, whether in the community or in custody, are supervised to ensure that they appear for trial and do not endanger the community.

Sentences are administered in accord with the traditional sentencing principles of: a) retribution (punishment); b) rehabilitation; c) deterrence; d) incapacitation; and e) reparation. These principles, or purposes of sentences, apply to community-based sentences as well as to terms of imprisonment.

### a) Retribution (punishment)

Retribution, or imposing penalties for proven offences, thereby holding offenders accountable for their actions, is central to most sentences. Punishment is effected through the limitation of freedom, whether under community supervision or in custody. Offenders are committed to correctional programs *as* punishment, not *for* punishment. Correctional programs are designed and administered to carry out the penalty imposed in a reasonable and humane manner.

### b) Rehabilitation

Sentenced offenders are provided reasonable opportunity for positive and constructive activities within operational and resource limitations and consideration for the protection of the public. Both institutional and community correctional programs provide opportunities for work, social, educational, and recreational activities and spiritual development. Offenders are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.

Correctional programs, however, are not intended to provide opportunities that exceed those generally available to citizens in the community. While offenders may benefit from work skills developed through job placements or other programs over extended periods, the branch does not provide vocational training.

Farm, forestry, and shop programs produce goods, but they are not solely production-oriented. In addition, they provide rewarding and constructive activities for sentenced offenders. Goods produced are used to support the operation of the branch.

When offenders admitted to correctional programs require treatment for medical, physical, or psychological problems, the branch provides appropriate treatment or makes community health resources available to them.

Although rehabilitation does occur within correctional programs, the programs alone cannot rehabilitate offenders. While programs can encourage behavioral change, rehabilitation is the responsibility of offenders themselves.

### c) Deterrence

Deterrence, whether of the offender himself or others, is achieved through the imposition of sentence and the resulting limitation of freedom. Correctional programming does not compound or undermine the deterrent intent.

### d) Incapacitation

The protection of the community is paramount throughout the administration of sentence. Supervision of offenders within the community, on probation, temporary absence, or parole, and their placement in the various institutional programs must ensure that the public is not at risk.

### e) Reparation

Offenders should be provided opportunities to make amends to society generally and/or, where appropriate, to the victims specifically. Community service, restitution, or direct compensation to victims for losses suffered are effective means of encouraging offenders to accept accountability for their actions. Such penalties offer offenders opportunities for positive and constructive activity. By these means, correctional programs provide some restoration of losses suffered by the community as a result of crime, thus helping to ensure that justice is seen to be done.

# STATEMENT OF VALUES AND BELIEFS

Corrections Branch staff are guided by the following set of values and beliefs in determining program, policy, procedures, and the quality of services rendered:

## GENERAL

**1.** All persons must have their rights respected and be treated with dignity.

**2.** While persons subject to an order of the court, the parole board, or otherwise under the supervision of the branch retain many rights of other citizens, certain rights are forfeited. These include rights implicit in the limitations of freedom imposed by the court and those dictated by the conditions and degree of custody, security, and/or supervision.

**3.** All offenders must be held accountable for their acts.

**4.** All persons and institutions have a right to be protected from victimization by offenders.

**5.** The justice system upholds certain values by imposing sanctions. The law generally reflects current values held by the community. The law may, at times, lead in the formulation of these values, but it also may lag behind current values and available knowledge.

**6.** Some conflicts are best resolved through traditional informal methods. Those that cannot be resolved through these methods are referred to the courts.

**7.** The courts review the circumstances under which offences were committed, the backgrounds of the offenders, and the circumstances of the victims so that all the information leading to the offences can be taken into account in sentencing.

**8.** Imprisonment is an extreme penalty that should be used to protect the community from dangerous and violent individuals or from those for whom lesser forms of intervention have proven unsatisfactory.

**9.** In attempting to meet its goals, the branch must avoid excessive and unnecessary intervention into people's lives, including the lives of offenders.

**10.** Society must accept responsibility for conditions which contribute to criminal activity and family breakdown and must work towards changing those conditions.

**11.** Confidentiality of information must be maintained.

## OFFENDERS

**12.** Offenders are members of society and are to be treated with respect and dignity and are not to be subjected to cruel and unusual forms of treatment.

**13.** Offenders have the right to exercise self-determination and make their own decisions within the limitations of available programs, the penalties imposed by the courts, and considerations for protection of the community.

**14.** As the majority of offenders function within acceptable societal norms, they should be subject only to the penalty imposed by the courts and should not be compelled to participate in programs designed for behavioral change. A minority reflect a consistent pattern of criminal behavior, therefore, some correctional programs and services should allow for and, indeed, encourage behavioral change.

**15.** Where feasible, opportunities should be provided for offenders to make amends to society generally and/or to victims specifically.

**16.** Offenders should not receive more rights and opportunities than those generally available to other members of society.

**17.** Reasonable conduct should be expected of all offenders participating in branch programs.

**18.** Sentenced offenders should be held in custody until the expiration of their sentences or until there are reasonable indicators that the risks they posed to society have been sufficiently reduced to allow them to be considered for placement in less secure community-based programs. The level of security in which offenders are to be held should be consistent with the risks they pose to the community and/or themselves.

**19.** Isolation from positive interactions in the community and lack of responsibility for many aspects of day-to-day community living can affect inmates' abilities to function in socially acceptable and competent ways when they are released from custody. To assist their re-entry, therefore, community correctional programs should be available to those inmates who do not threaten the community's security.

**20.** Inmates are entitled to a basic level of subsistence, including food, shelter, clothing, and medical and dental attention. They are also entitled to basic privileges consistent with their level of custody, control, and supervision and to the same degree of personal security and protection as that of other members of society.

## YOUNG PERSONS

**21.** Young persons who commit offences should bear responsibility for their behavior. Because of their level of development and maturity, however, they should not be held accountable in the same manner or suffer the same consequences as adults.

**22.** Young persons have special needs and may require a greater degree of guidance and assistance than is generally accorded to adults.

**23.** Parents should be responsible for the care and supervision of their children. Removal of a young person from parental supervision, either partially or entirely, should only occur when alternative measures that allow continued parental supervision have failed or are obviously inappropriate.

## ACCUSED PERSONS

**24.** Accused persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty and should be treated accordingly. If the court considers those accused as dangerous or unlikely to appear for trial, the presumption of their innocence is to be retained during their supervision or detention.

## FAMILY COURT SERVICES

**25.** Branch policy and services should acknowledge family units as the basic building blocks of society and support their development.

**26.** When family problems are so severe as to be destructive to individual members, separation may be the best or only alternative. The spouses' decisions in these matters must be respected.

**27.** Families approaching the court for assistance in resolving issues concerning separation or divorce do so voluntarily rather than by direction of the court. In the services provided, therefore, assistance, advice, and encouragement of personal choice rather than control and imposition of sanctions should be emphasized.

**28.** Family members considering separation have the right to non-adversarial services to help them find solutions to their disputes within the context of societal values and law.

**29.** Parents have a continuing responsibility to provide financial, emotional, and moral support to their children in spite of separation or divorce.

**30.** Children have a right to have their needs and concerns considered when decisions are made regarding the future of their family.

**31.** All family members have a right to freedom from physical, sexual, or psychological violence or abuse. When such violence or abuse takes place, it should be dealt with by the justice system in the same manner as with other criminal acts.

**32.** When offenders commit criminal acts within the family, the concerns and needs of other family members, particularly victims, must be taken into account by the justice system.

## STAFF MANAGEMENT

**33.** Branch staff should be supported and encouraged for their creative endeavors in their work and their involvement in policy and program decision-making processes.

# GOALS AND STRATEGIES

## Goal A

Provide information that will assist the court in determining disposition.

STRATEGY: Investigation, assessment, and reporting.

1) Investigate family disputes as requested by the Family Court to provide it with information relevant to maintenance and child custody and access.

2) Conduct investigations as authorized by statute or court directive to provide the court with relevant information about adult or youth offenders.

3) Advise the Criminal or Youth Court on available and suitable dispositions and resources, both within and outside the branch.

4) Where appropriate, identify special program placement when providing the court with options for sentencing.

## Goal B

Administer the dispositions and orders of the court that fall within the jurisdiction of the branch.

STRATEGY ONE: Community supervision and control.

1) Provide supervision, counselling, and/or referral to other agencies to ensure that the spirit and intent of dispositions are achieved.

2) Provide a variety of community-based residential and non-residential attendance facilities and programs.

3) Develop and maintain means for communication and information-sharing with justice and social agencies concerned with surveillance and control.

4) Help administer Family Court-orders according to statute or court directive by:

a) explaining court orders and instructions and consequences of failure to comply;

b) promoting orderly adherence to orders relating to matters of custody, access, and maintenance; and

c) arranging appropriate volunteer or other agency involvement.

5) Provide appropriate opportunities for victim or community reparation.

6) Provide information to victims regarding the legal process, counselling support, and referrals to helping agencies.

STRATEGY TWO: Alternatives to imprisonment.

1) Recommend to the court appropriate alternatives to traditional sentences or remand such as:

a) probation orders without supervision and with appropriate requirements such as restitution, abstention from alcohol/drugs, etc;

b) probation orders with supervision and other requirements such as place of residence, community service, counselling, those noted in a) above, etc.;

c) bail supervision order with or without a residence requirement;

d) absolute discharge;

e) discharge with appropriate requirements as per a) and b) above;

f) compensation order; and/or

g) fines.

2) In conjunction with other agencies, explore alternatives to imprisonment by providing incentives and opportunities for innovative demonstration projects.

STRATEGY THREE: Imprisonment.

1) Provide a variety of custodial facilities to:

a) separate dangerous and hard-core offenders from the community;

b) separately contain young offenders; and

c) control remand prisoners in graduated security levels.

2) Supervise offenders released from custody and provide standards and procedures for gradual re-entry into the community.

3) Provide a classification process to determine the level of control required for each sentenced offender.

4) Provide opportunities for inmate work, education, recreation, life-skills and spiritual development that:

a) encourage responsible personal decision-making; and

b) contribute positively to the individual's quality of life, to the branch, and to the community.

5) Help offenders understand the reasons for their sentences and support their efforts to make amends to victims.

6) Ensure that rights and responsibilities of staff, inmates, and the community are upheld and that their respective responsibilities are identified and communicated to all concerned.

7) Ensure the availability of medical, dental, and psychiatric services comparable to those generally available to the public.

8) Provide information to institutions and parole boards on incarcerated offenders before their re-entry into the community.

9) Provide information to other related agencies with due regard to confidentiality.

## Goal C

Assist families resolve disputes when court intervention is being considered.

STRATEGY: Mediation and conciliation.

1) Provide conciliation counselling and referral services to families seeking help in resolving disputes over child custody and access, family maintenance, and other issues arising from marital separation.

2) Help families resolve disputes out of court whenever possible and appropriate.

3) Provide information and assistance to families regarding criminal matters (assaults, threats, abduction of children, non-support, etc.).

4) Identify family situations where intervention by social agencies rather than the justice system is preferable and make referrals accordingly.

## Goal D

Encourage effective cooperation within the justice system and with related social service agencies.

STRATEGY: Liaison with justice system and other social service personnel.

1) Develop guidelines with police, Crown counsel, court administration personnel, and the judiciary for determining which conflicts should be resolved through mediation or other community-based means.

2) Identify and recommend to police/Crown counsel appropriate alternatives to court action.

3) Provide Crown counsel/police with information about persons referred for possible diversion or screening before court involvement.

4) Increase communication and information-sharing among justice system and other social service personnel.

5) Ensure that the goals and approaches of justice system components are mutually compatible and complementary.

6) Plan jointly with justice system components and other agencies (e.g. Elizabeth Fry) or ministries (e.g. Human Resources, Health, Education) for more effective delivery of services.

**Goal E**

Increase community and individual awareness about ways of preventing crime, delinquency, victimization, and family breakdown.

STRATEGY ONE: Information sharing.

1) Provide information to all concerned on social conditions contributing to crime, delinquency, victimization, and family breakdown.

2) Increase public and justice-community awareness and understanding of programs operated by police, court, legal, and correctional personnel.

3) Communicate to all concerned general information on branch activities, including those unrelated to criminal behavior such as services to families and individuals.

4) Communicate to all concerned information on types of offenders, offences, sentences, expenditures, and the expectations and results of branch programs.

STRATEGY TWO: Community involvement.

1) Encourage and participate in the development of programs that alleviate social conditions contributing to crime, delinquency, victimization, and family breakdown.

2) Encourage the reduction of opportunities for criminal behavior (e.g. Neighborhood Watch).

3) Foster the development of informal, community-based resources for mediation and resolution of social conflicts that do not involve the justice system.

4) Cooperate with and encourage public and social service agencies to assist offenders.

5) Encourage and provide opportunities for voluntary participation of citizens and community groups in correctional programs.

6) Provide resources to community and private agencies that help the branch achieve its goals.

7) Provide training and opportunities for branch staff to work with community organizations.

8) Use existing community organizations (e.g. John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society, Family Court committees) to promote public awareness and communication.

**Goal F**

Cooperate with the police, courts, and all other components to actively promote reform of the justice system.

STRATEGY ONE: Evaluation of current practice.

1) Interpret the goals and approaches of the branch and their relationship to existing legislation.

2) Assess social costs and trends of criminal activity to identify offences that should be handled outside the justice system.

3) When appropriate, develop and communicate to the Minister the views of the Corrections Branch on selected controversial issues related to justice.

4) Provide appropriate opportunities for joint-training, -education, and -development of justice personnel.

STRATEGY TWO: Program development and innovation.

Devise and implement specific reforms consistent with contemporary correctional theory, practice, and legislation such as victim assistance and compensation.

STRATEGY THREE: Legislative reform.

1) Review relevant federal and provincial legislation.

2) Support research on justice practices and the law and assess the extent to which practices and the law are consistent with social standards and values.

3) Recommend to the Minister appropriate revisions, deletions, and additions to the law based on legislative review, research, correctional theory, and practice.

**Goal G**

Manage the branch in a manner that ensures the efficient and effective use of resources.

STRATEGY ONE: Management.

1) Develop, delineate, and coordinate correctional responsibilities between the federal and provincial governments.

2) Advise government on correctional services and their corresponding resource and legislative requirements.

3) Maintain clear management accountability and responsibility within the branch and the justice community.

4) Articulate clearly the philosophy, purpose, and goals of the branch.

5) Develop and maintain policies, procedures, and standards related to all programs and services.

6) Determine operational priorities.

7) Delegate authority and assign objectives, responsibilities, and duties.

8) Maintain appropriate information and monitoring systems to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of branch activities.

STRATEGY TWO: Staff management.

1) Ensure that staff are provided with adequate training to carry out their assigned duties; provide enhanced opportunities for job- and career-related education and training.

2) Advocate adequate compensation and benefits for staff consistent with the level and complexity of their responsibilities.

3) Ensure that staff are provided with adequate support services to carry out their assigned duties effectively.

4) Provide opportunities for job rotation, lateral and vertical career mobility, job enrichment, and improved working environments.

5) Periodically review and clarify job roles and their relationship to organizational goals.

6) Provide consistent standards of performance and policy guidelines.

7) Promote an atmosphere in which staff are encouraged to evaluate current branch and personnel practices and make suggestions for their change and development.

8) Encourage management and union cooperation consistent with good labor-management practice, and be governed by the terms and conditions of the relevant collective agreements.